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April 5, 1999

For Immediate Release:

EIU STUDENT RESEARCHER HEADS TO CAPITOL HILL

CHARLESTON -- An Eastern Illinois University chemistry major will be one of 80 science students from around the country to present research projects to the U.S. Congress on Wednesday, April 14.

Senior Heather Hundley was chosen to participate in a research poster session hosted by the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). This "April Dialog" event is designed to help inform legislators about research that undergraduates are doing because it is important for Congress to have a clear understanding of the programs they fund and why these programs are important.

In addition, participants also signed a petition titled "An Investment in Tomorrow" which reflects their common belief in the value of supporting America's upcoming generation of scientific researchers.

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Both the petition and the poster sessions were designed to thank members of Congress for their support thus far, and to ask for continued support -- possibly even increased funding -- of undergraduate research opportunities.

Programs that provide hands-on learning experiences for undergraduate students include the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates, the Department of Energy's University and Science Education program and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Space Grant program.

"Every other year "April Dialog" brings faculty (to Washington, D.C.) to talk with agencies and interact with legislators," said Ellen Keiter, chair of Eastern's chemistry department. "This is the second year that poster presentations have been a part of it."

Interested students were required to submit an abstract to the CUR explaining the work that was performed and discussing the importance of the work to science and society.

Hundley's research project focuses on the self-signaling G-protein, which is a way of cell signaling and responding, and the interaction between two parts of the G-protein. She says diabetes and vision loss could be consequences if the G-protein doesn't function properly.

The 22-year-old Springfield native says she's both excited and nervous about the Washington, D.C. event, but takes comfort in knowing what to expect. She was one of nearly 20 EIU student researchers who, in late March, spent several hours at the

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STUDENT RESEARCHER

Illinois State Capitol explaining their research to state legislators.

Hundley, who will be traveling to the nation's capital with Keiter, will receive one credit hour for her efforts. In addition to the poster session, she will attend a morning orientation session/continental breakfast and receive the opportunity to visit her representative and/or senator and a tour of the Capitol building.

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